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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/693,663	10/24/2003	Gene DiPoto	ENDIUS.033A	9623
20995	7590	05/18/2006	EXAMINER	
KNOBBE MARTENS OLSON & BEAR LLP 2040 MAIN STREET FOURTEENTH FLOOR IRVINE, CA 92614			SWIGER III, JAMES L	
		ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER	
			3733	

DATE MAILED: 05/18/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/693,663	DIPOTO, GENE
	Examiner	Art Unit
	James L. Swiger	3733

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 October 2003.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-18 is/are pending in the application.
 - 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-18 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date 4/05/04.
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) and the Intellectual Property and High Technology Technical Amendments Act of 2002 do not apply when the reference is a U.S. patent resulting directly or indirectly from an international application filed before November 29, 2000. Therefore, the prior art date of the reference is determined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

Claims 1-4, 8-12, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Davison (US 6,530,926). Davison discloses a method of securing vertebrae including the steps of inserting in a patient an access device (see Fig. 5, item 10, and Col. 2, lines 58-63), where the access device has a first and second configuration (see Col. 3, lines 3-39) that has an enlarged cross sectional area (see Fig. 1), and wherein through the access device, a fastener can be inserted can be inserted and that is capable of advancement through the first and second vertebrae for securing the spine of a patient. (See Col. 11, lines 18-56 and col. 12, lines 6-18). The device is actuated from the first to second position using the expansion tool (112) and manual force. Further Davison discloses a method wherein the method is generally a posterior (see Fig. 5) or posterolateral approach (See Col. 12, lines 44-48), a method that has a boring tool to yield access to the vertebrae (note Davidson refers to the action of creating holes as

drilling, but is regarded as a step capable of “boring” holes in preparation for the vertebral fasteners), preventing movement of the first vertebra in relation to the second via two fixation elements (650) into the cannula (see Col. 13, lines 18-22), wherein the same access device may be used for the second fastener.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 6-7 and 14-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Davison '926 in view of Cornwall (US 6,485,518). Davison discloses the claimed method except for the one or more fasteners providing specifically transfacet or translaminar fixation. Cornwall et al. disclose a placement of screws (see Fig. 1) that are in accordance with the definition for a transfacet screw placement orientation according to the reference of Ferrara et al. “A Biomechanical Comparison of Facet Screw Fixation and Pedicle Screw fixation” that allows for additional support in a triangular fashion (Col. 1, lines 54 through Col. 2, line 6). This angled approach, or even in the case of the translaminar, where the screws essentially extend in two directions from a single point along the midline of the vertebrae allow for a minimally invasive procedure (Col. 2, lines 5-17). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate into the method of Davison the step of transfacet or

translaminar fixation in view of Cornwall et al. to better fix the spinal screws in light of a minimally invasive spinal procedure.

Claims 5 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Davison '926 in view of Neubardi (US 5,196,015). Davison '926 disclose the claimed method except for the step of scoring the surgical location prior to delivering the fastener through the bone. Neubardt discloses an indirect scoring of the area that is performed by placing the tool to the area and verifying the mark of the tool tip by indicia located on the tool shaft. (Col. 5, lines 10-16). In this way the location is marked before the fastener or securing device is delivered. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate into the method of Davison the step of scoring and marking the area of interest for securing the fasteners in view of Neubardt to provide accurate fixation in a minimal access procedure.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. See PTO-892 for cited art of interest.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to James L. Swiger whose telephone number is 571-272-5557. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eduardo Robert can be reached on 571-272-4719. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

 5/15/06
JLS


EDUARDO C. ROBERT
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER